has, in addition, notified the Tea Marketing Control Order 2003 and issued directives regarding changes in auction rules to provide for a more transparent price discovery mechanism for tea. In the case of spices, assistance is being provided for the production of planting material, establishment of nurseries, area expansion, pest and disease management, transfer of technology to growers etc. Similarly, suitable financial assistance is also provided to rubber growers, processors, exporters etc. for increasing production of Natural Rubber through expansion of area, enhancing the productivity, improving the quality of the produce to achieve competitiveness in the global markets, promoting agricultural and technological research in the interest of the industry besides promoting export of this commodity.

Exclusive marketing rights

1264. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the statistics of the EMR (Exclusive Marketing Rights) granted since 1995;

(b) the state of functioning of the 'mail-box' provisions established in the Indian IPR Bill; and

(c) Government's preparedness on the grant of Product Patenting to be started from 2005?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) Two exclusive marketing rights have been granted since 1995.

(b) The Patents Act, 1970 as amended by the Patents (Amendment) Act, 1999 provides for receipt and storage of product patent applications in the fields of drugs and medicines. As per the provisions in the law, these are to be kept unexamined till December 31,2004.

(c) Government has undertaken broad-based consultations with a view to amend the Patents Act, 1970 for providing product patent protection in the field of drugs and medicines. Administratively, Government has undertaken a project for the comprehensive modernisation of Patent Offices and substantial action has since been

taken. This includes: recruitment of additional examiners of patents specialised in different fields of technology, development of facilities for training of examiners, computerisation of operations, development of work manual for ensuring uniformity in operations, preparation of digital database of patent records, strengthening of library and search facilities, infrastructure upgradation, etc.

Failure to check dengue outbreak

1265. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Dengue cases reported after September, 2003 and whether there were any deaths reported following the outbreak of Dengue;

(b) whether it is Government's failure to undertake a co-ordinated exercise in its preventive measures to curb the spread of Dengue;

(c) the reasons for Government having not launched any exercise to take preventive measures before the outbreak of Dengue; and

(d) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) The number of dengue cases and deaths reported after September, 2003 in the country, State-wise, is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(b) to (d) Eradication of Dengue, which is a vector borne disease is not technically feasible. Therefore, all possible efforts are made to prevent and control the disease.

The strategy adopted for prevention and control of Dengu includes:—

— Issuance of advance warning to States/UTs suggesting all the preventive and control measures.

— Institutional & Management Capacity Building, trained manpower development and efficient Management Information System.

— Information, Education & Communication towards personal